

It does seem that wherever you go these days the one gift you are never offered is silence. Shopping generally entails the monotonous drone of background music - well, do you really call that kind of noise: music? If you're on the tube or the train, you either find yourself next to someone with sounds escaping from their earphoned-walkman or the latest in mobile phone signature tunes.

There is a Swiss inscription which says "Speech is silvern, Silence is golden" - to which Thomas Carlyle commented "Speech is of Time. Silence is of Eternity". For many of us, of course, we have become so used to noise being part of our everyday lives, that silence is a bit too much for us to test out. What do we do with it? You may well think that's all very well for someone else but you are 'not that sort of person' or it may be that you live on your own and feel you get enough silence. Ah yes: but how do you use your silence?

Maybe we can use it when looking at the beauty of nature, a flowering bush or a softly-flowing stream. We can look out of a window and watch a bird tapping at the peanuts or we can sink into the picture contained in a library book. Be silent as you ponder over a lovely painting or sit entranced at the flickering flame of a candle. Silence doesn't mean emptiness. In fact, life in its real fullness can only be attained if we find true silence in our lives.

The difficult part is that silence requires discipline and in the present culture of instantaneity, perseverance does not come easily. Being useless and silent in the presence of God, says Henri Nouwen, belongs to the core of all prayer. In the silence, we hear all sorts of inner noises, inner thoughts, sometimes ones that are deeply irritating and difficult to cope with, thoughts we might prefer not to encounter. Slowly, ever so slowly, however, we discover that the silent times create a quiet within us, a strange kind of peace. It is then that we discover our still point and in this way we are given a greater awareness of ourselves and God.

The silent still point is deep inside each one of us and we would do well to try and find it. God is the friend of silence. Jesus found it necessary to reach his Father in silence and went off on his own to pray. The more we receive in silent prayer, the more we can give in our lives and as Mother Theresa said "We need silence to be able to touch souls. The essential thing is not what we say, but what God says to us and through us".

I weave a silence onto my lips; I weave a silence into my mind
I weave a silence within my heart
I close my ears to distractions; I close my eyes to attractions
I close my heart to temptations
Calm me Lord as you stilled the storm
Still me Lord, keep me from harm
Let all the tumult within me cease
Enfold me Lord, in your peace.

(Celtic verses)

Freda Evans

QUIET DAY
SATURDAY 17th FEBRUARY 2001
10a.m. - 4p.m.

with The Ven. Timothy Raphael
in a wonderful tithed barn near Chobham

A guided journey to learn more about prayer and silence

Cost will be around £5 and bring a packed lunch

Please sign the list on the clipboard in Church or speak to Freda

We will try to arrange lifts for anyone who needs transport



Another evening of poetry is planned for Saturday 24th February, at 7p.m. in the Hall. As an event at St. James is unthinkable without food, this will be combined with a "pot-luck" supper.

Neither part of this evening will be possible without the participation of many of the congregation and their friends and families!

Please contact Ruth Mills if you have a poem you would like to read/recite - or if there is a memorable performance that you have heard on a previous occasion that you would like to hear again, so we can

persuade the performer to repeat it.

If everyone would bring something to contribute for supper, that will deal with refreshments, with the excitement of "something different". Main courses, puddings, bread, cheese, wine, beer, lemonade - all will be welcome. If the freedom to decide is too much for you, Ruth will be glad to help with suggestions!

A contribution of 50p will cover costs, but any "profits" will be given to SPEAR to help local homeless single people.

Phone 8977 5165

CHURCHYARD RECORDS - 1864-2000

In the early 1960s Denis Leatherdale, Roy Brooks and Jack Gostling were appointed Guardians of the Churchyard and Denis drew up the original ground plan with each individual grave marked on it.

In 1988 Helen Taylor, with a team of helpers, began the mammoth task of recording all the details of the graves on individual sheets of paper and giving each grave a number. This was, in fact, before the Churchyard was officially closed by Order in Council in 1991 and the maintenance of the area taken over by the Council so it was not as easy as it would be today. Helen then took all this information and inserted each name on a card index with the appropriate area and grave number. It was Helen's intention to publish this information in typed form so that people would have access to it, especially people who come from afar looking for the graves of past relatives but don't know where they are actually buried. Helen started the process and then moved to Suffolk! Having helped Helen with the recording, all the information was passed on to me!

Before the final typing could take place we also wanted to check through the Burial Registers beginning in 1864 to ensure our records were as accurate as possible. Jill Goddard, Richard Denton and Peter Nunn helped me with this task. The final hurdle was to put the information into the computer for printing. Dick Wilde came to my rescue and has meticulously drawn all the plans and typed over 4000 names which makes the final booklet 150 pages long.

We have now had the records printed and presented Helen with her copy! We have placed copies in Hampton Hill Library and Richmond Library where all the local historical records are kept. A copy has been sent to the London Metropolitan Archives in London who look after all our Burial Registers except the one in current use from 1948 onwards. There is also a copy in the Vestry.

Not only have we listed all the actual graves but also the names on the War Memorial and on the Board inside the Church so this information is readily available for anyone doing historical research. We have also included the names of the people whose ashes are buried in the Garden of Rest. It has been a very big task which has finally come to a



conclusion thanks to so many people. There is a lot of history in our Churchyard and the actual recording of the information from the gravestones was fascinating. If you walk through the Churchyard do pause a moment to read some of the stones or perhaps take a look at the book next time you visit the Library.

Janet Nunn

YOUNG CHURCH NEWS

Report on the Autumn Term Activities

The Young Church have held discussions on a variety of topics: Should the conjoined twins be separated?, which raised many ethical issues; Why do people go on holiday and is tourism good or bad?; and Sport - does it unite or divide? Not surprisingly, agreement was not always reached, but the sessions gave everyone a chance to air their views and consider the issues involved.

In November, Young Church members had a "sleep-over" in the Church Hall. After a supper of pizza and ice-cream, chattering and fun, adults and young people settled down for the night with temporary "curtains" covering the windows. A hearty breakfast, including tea and muffins, concluded their first sleep-over. The Young Church raised a total of £120 from the sleep-over and a cake stall and this money was given to the charity 'CRISIS'.



PARISH WEEKEND - 2001

This year's Parish Weekend will be at Wychcroft, near Godalming (in response to several requests to return to that lovely setting, but in the summer). It will run from Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th June. The cost of the weekend will be £70, but if this is out of your range may be negotiable. A savings plan will be established.

People who have been to a Parish weekend before will know roughly what to expect, but if you haven't been before, do give the idea some consideration - talk to people who have been or speak to me, Brian or Freda about your concerns. It does contribute greatly to our parish life, as well as to individual spiritual development.

Please ask John Gossage (8979 3793) or me for an application form.

Ruth Mills (8977 5165)



THE CENTENARY
BISHOP₁₀₀
OF KENSINGTON
1901-2001



The Kensington Area Centenary celebrations will conclude with a service on December 2nd 2001 at which the Archbishop of Canterbury will preach.

It's planned to include a new hymn or song written for the occasion by... well, why not you or a member of your church or school? What can you come up with to celebrate 100 years of ministry and mission in the Kensington area? We need either words to go with a well-known tune or else both the words and music.

Entry forms are available from the Bishop's office (write to Hymn/Song Competition, 19 Campden Hill Square, London W8 7JY, telephone 020 7727 9818 or email bishop.kensington@london.org.uk)

Closing date for entries is June 30th 2001.

The Centenary of the Bishop of Kensington

On the evening of Sunday 7th January, nine members of St. James's congregation attended a service at St. Mary Abbott's Church, Kensington to celebrate the Centenary of the Bishopric of Kensington. Bishop Michael is the tenth Bishop, which he claimed was nothing to the Bishop of London whose first predecessor was ordained c300AD. The service was attended by Mayors and civic representatives of the London Boroughs in the Area, leaders of other Christian churches in West London, and hundreds of invited representatives from the Parishes. The church leaders processed into the packed church at the beginning of the service, followed by representatives of each Deanery. The Hampton Deanery banner was carried by Hugh Wood, with Rev. David Vanstone and Ann Peterken among our representatives.

Clearly a lot of planning, consultation and thought had gone into the service, which aimed to appeal to all tastes! We had traditional hymns and Bible readings interspersed with a testimony, a beautiful liturgical dance, the anthem *O Clap Your Hands* by Vaughan Williams, and a swinging version of *O God Our Help in Ages Past* led by Ali Berry and a worship band during which candles were lit throughout the congregation. The prayers gave thanks for the past and for the present, and looked to the future of our faith. We ended with the specially written Centenary Prayer, a copy of which we were all given on a presentation bookmark. The sermon was given by the Bishop of London, in very good form!

In line with the Gospel (Matthew 25:14-30 - The Parable of the Talents) the unusual step was taken to reverse the collection! Instead of asking us for money, we were each given a card inscribed with the words "*Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things: I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness.*", and a 'talent' (£1 coin) taped to it. If anyone has an idea for doubling £9 - legally - we'd like to hear from you!

Elizabeth Gossage

Diary dates for the Centenary Year

FEBRUARY

28 Ash Wednesday at the Cathedral

MARCH

6 The Blue School, Isleworth: SA

8 Clergy Study Day: The Bishop of Birmingham

21 Civic Reception: Syon House, Isleworth

23 Reception for volunteers of the West London Homeless project

28 St. Stephen, Twickenham: SA

29 St. Mary, Twickenham: SA

APRIL

4 Bishop Perrin School, Whitton: SA

5 St. Paul's, Brentford: SA

SA = School Assembly presenting Mission Possible

THE BOOK OF RUTH

It was inevitable that I should take an interest in my namesake, Ruth, so I can't remember a time when I did not know the story. No doubt I did not question the meaning of the story of Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi when I was a child, but as an adult I have come to see it in different lights. Most recently I was encouraged to study it in Hebrew as part of my Old Testament degree. It was there that I discovered the humour of the story as well as the relevance of it to the present day.

An essay that I had to write for my course was "Was the Book of Ruth written by a woman?" (or something like that!) My answer was, in summary: "It was probably developed by women telling stories around the Israeli village pump - or equivalent - but it was almost certainly written down by a man". My reasons for thinking that also touch on the humour. The names of the characters have the feeling of giggling women poking slightly ribald fun at the men in the story.

The first men who are mentioned are those husbands who have died, Naomi's husband, Elimelech is an exception, as is Ruth's son, Obed, but these are the historical figures who were important in the genealogy of the Kings of Israel. The two childless sons, Mahlon and Chillion were fair game for the women's humour. They were insignificant and are called "Sickly" and "Wasting" respectively. Orpah, the daughter-in-law who returned to her native country, had the name of "The Back of the neck" - the view Naomi had of her. The root of the name Ruth is uncertain but could mean "Friend" or "Satisfied" - I rather think the women at the pump would have regarded her as a friend. The narrative in English explains something of the meaning of Naomi's name, as she says "Don't call me Naomi (sweetness) but Mara (Bitterness) as the Almighty has caused much bitterness to me." Boaz, the last of the key characters, had what it takes to father a child. His name may mean "Strength is in him". There is a legend that he died before his son was born.

The question must be asked as to why this story was recorded and included in the Hebrew canon. Among the ideas are that the fluctuating relationship with Moab was on an upswing and this story emphasised the Moabite ancestry of David, the great hero king. Another theory is that this was an example of how refugees might be treated or how they might behave.

In every age this has stood as a marvellous illustration of female friendship. The story, especially the wonderful speech in chapter I verses 16 and 17, is often used in



services blessing lesbian partnerships.

This is a book that is easily readable at a single sitting. Using the King James/Authorised Version there is much loved poetic language and using modern versions, such as the New Revised Standard Version (both quite accurate translations), there is a simple story of devotion and rewards for good behaviour which, when re-read has deeper significance.

Ruth Mills

NEW YEAR'S DAY PARADE

On New Year's Day approximately 10,000 young musicians and their pom-pom girls from all over America march down Whitehall. Why do they do this? It is to entertain the people of London. Thousands of people, including me, go to see these youngsters, some as young as 12, proudly march in their smart uniforms, playing their instruments, some of them being as large as themselves. It is a wonderful couple of hours' entertainment and all the time I can get to see it I will go. On the parade there are donkeys, large blown-up figures and lots of super de luxe motor cycles to end with. These boys and girls have to work after school to pay their expenses; there are no subsidies for them. That fact alone would make me want to go on New Year's Day and clap my hands till they hurt to let them know I am one of thousands who want to say "Thank you, see you again next New Year". No matter what the weather has been like, the sun always shines on this parade; honest!

Rose Frier

CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP

Saturday 10th February 10.30a.m. - 1p.m.

on the theme of ST. PAUL

Please sign the list in Church if you would like your child(ren) to attend
or if you can offer some help



Congratulations to Michael Bunce, who was awarded an OBE for services to broadcasting in the New Year Honours. Michael produced current affairs programmes for the BBC and edited the Money Programme and Nationwide before becoming executive director of the Royal Television Society, a post he held for nine years.

Congratulations also to Tracy, Rob and Miles Upton on the birth of Dominic.

We would like to welcome Jean Burman, the new resident of Margery Orton's former home in St. James's Road. We were also pleased to have Noreen Chisholm's parents with us over Christmas, visiting from Zimbabwe

We were sorry to hear that Kath Brooks had had a nasty accident but are pleased that she is now recovering and was home in time to celebrate her 80th birthday. Kath would like to thank all those who have been so kind and supportive.

Sheila Clarke, from St. James's Road, and Deirdre Curran's mother, Christine Delaney, have both died. We send our sympathy to their friends and relatives.

Churches Together will be holding a Taize evening at All Saints, Hampton at 8p.m. on Wednesday 7th February. Freda Evans will be preaching at both services for the Women's World Day of Prayer on 2nd March, at 2p.m. and 8p.m. at St. Richard's, Hanworth.

Martin Hinckley would be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to join the band that plays for our informal services. If there is any other way in which you would like to contribute to the Church, perhaps by reading, cleaning, acting as a sidesperson, bellringing, catering or delivering the Spire, please speak to one of the clergy, churchwardens or sidespersons, who would be delighted to point you in the right direction!



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From Betty Stewart:

Thank you for the wonderful time and for the very generous gift vouchers for John Lewis and the Burlington Hotel which you presented to me on 17th December. I shall have a good look around John Lewis before buying something which I will always treasure, and I am sure Kate will organise my trip to Folkestone.

I would like everyone to know how much I have appreciated the tremendous support which Brian and the congregation have always given me. With my love to everybody.

Betty

Have you signed the petition for Sports Lottery Funding for Hampton Open Air Pool?

Full information next month

THE UPPER ROOM

The collections taken at our Christmas services went to the Upper Room, an ecumenical community project set up in 1990 by St. Saviour with St. Mary's Church in Cobbold Road - in between the far end of Shepherds Bush and the top end of Chiswick.

Its purpose is to provide a welcoming centre for those who are homeless, disadvantaged and marginalised. They open seven times a week to provide a healthy meal and this includes a cooked breakfast on one day and a 2-course lunch on Sundays. Personal services such as haircuts and chiropody are offered as well as clothing, shoes and toiletries.

Each person is treated as an individual and is able to participate in literacy classes or to take advantage of help offered by a visiting specialist team to gain permanent accommodation. Recently, a Film and Discussion Group was set up so there could be an additional avenue where guests could develop their inter-personal skills and talk about issues that matter to them.

In any one week between 150 and 200 people will benefit from this project and during the winter months, the project opens one night a week, as a member of West London Churches Homeless Concern, which provides a Cold Weather Nightshelter Scheme. If anyone would like to know more about this project or would like to help it in some way please contact Freda Evans on 020 8941 4424.

FROM THE DECEMBER REGISTERS

Baptism

24 Cameron Burrows Yell, 11 Ranelagh Road, Redhill

Funerals

| | | |
|----|---|----|
| 1 | Reginald Thorpe, 137 Burtons Road | 83 |
| 14 | Ethel Jenman, 96 Shacklegate Lane, Teddington | 86 |
| 20 | May Littler, Norfolk House, Weybridge | 89 |
| 27 | Gerald Charles Couch, 24 Sunningdale Avenue, Hanworth | 97 |

DATES TO NOTE IN FEBRUARY 2001

- 4 CANDLEMAS (tr) Richard Sewell, Area Secretary USPG at Informal Service
- 10 Children's Workshop on St. Paul the Apostle, Church Hall, 10.30a.m. - 1p.m.
- 17 Parish Quiet Day at Brook Place, Chobham. See notice elsewhere in Spire.
- 24 Pot Luck and Poetry Evening, Church Hall, 7p.m.
- 28 ASH WEDNESDAY Parish Communion and Imposition of Ashes 8p.m.
Lent begins.

COPY DATE FOR MARCH 2001 MAGAZINE: 10TH FEBRUARY